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Depiction of Blacks in the Works of Ernest Hemingway

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Eastern Illinois University

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Depiction of Blacks in the Works

of Ernest Hemingway

(TITLE)

BY

Sheila Marie Foor

THESIS

SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR THE DEGREE OF

Master of Arts

IN THE GRADUATE SCHOOL, EASTERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY
CHARLESTON, ILLINOIS

1978

YEAR

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DEPICTION OF BLACKS IN THE WORKS OF ERNEST HEMINGWAY

BY

SHEILA MARIE FOOR

B.A., Eastern Illinois University, 1977

ABSTRACT OF A THESIS

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Master of Arts in English at the Graduate School
of Eastern Illinois University

CHARLESTON, ILLINOIS

1978

Ernest Hemingway, winner of the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1954, is one of America's outstanding literary figures. Criticism of his work has been voluminous--ranging from bitterly derogative to superlative--with most of it focusing upon the famous 'Hemingway code hero,' upon his crisp, concise writing style, and upon his much-publicized personal life.

One example of negative assessment by critics is the one concerning black portraiture in Hemingway's fiction. However, no work deals exclusively with this aspect of his writing. The purpose of this thesis is, first, to present a general discussion on the nature of prejudice and examination of black stereotypes--their functions, categories, and effects. With this framework, we can turn to a detailed examination of the black characters in Hemingway's fiction, to determine which characters are stereotypic, as indeed some are, and which ones receive individualized treatment.

The significance of this study, then, is to offer insight into an, as yet, unexplored area in the works of Ernest Hemingway.

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Introduction

Ernest Hemingway, winner of the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1954, is a major literary figure of the twentieth century. Impact on his reading public has been as great as perhaps that of any author since the turn of the century. Criticism has been voluminous--ranging from Dwight Macdonald's bitterly derogatory assertion that "there is little evidence of thought in Hemingway's writing and much evidence of the reverse. . . . For all the sureness of his instinct as a writer, he strikes one as not particularly intelligent,"¹ to John O'Hara's assertion that Hemingway is "the outstanding author since the death of Shakespeare"²--with most of it focusing upon the famous 'Hemingway code hero,' upon his crisp, concise writing style, and upon his much-publicized personal life.

One example of negative assessment by critics is the one concerning black portraiture in Hemingway's fiction. Ralph Ellison accuses Hemingway of being "hard-boiled"³ and of "ignoring"⁴ the plight of blacks, lamenting that

technique for the sake of technique, and production for the sake of the market, lead to the neglect of the human need out of which they spring, so does it lead in literature to a marvelous technical virtuosity won at the expense of a gross insensitivity to fraternal values.⁵

Ellison goes on to state that he sees no value "in presenting a catalogue of Negro characters appearing in twentieth-century

fiction or in charting the racial attitudes of white writers."⁶ Perhaps not. If, however, he accuses a writer of being "grossly insensitive to human need," as he accuses Hemingway, then a comprehensive study of black characters is indeed crucial--a study which I have not been able to locate in any criticism on Hemingway's work. Generalizations such as Ellison's may leave the author shortchanged.

The purpose of this thesis, then, is to present a general discussion on the nature of prejudice and a more concise report on the black stereotype--its functions, its specific categories, and its results. With this framework, we can turn to a more intelligent discussion of Hemingway's literary purpose and an examination of the black characters in his fiction--determining which characters are stereotypic, as indeed some are, and which ones receive more individualized treatment.

Following such detailed examinations, we will be able to reach conclusions based not on generalizations and unsupported denouncements, but on facts concerning Hemingway's portraiture of blacks. Hemingway was not a supporter of social causes, as was John Steinbeck, for instance, so he cannot be accused of 'protesting too much' for any cause. I suggest, also, that, because it was his ultimate purpose in writing, we can depend on Hemingway for accurately registering and reflecting the mirrored image of his society as he saw it.

Black Stereotypes and the Nature of Prejudice

Blacks have historically been the target of the severest forms of prejudice not only by white-pigmented peoples, not only by most other lighter-skinned peoples, but also by blacks themselves (by octoroons, quadroons, and mulattos)--their quality of "goodness" determined not by their beliefs, not by their actions or their humanity, but by a pigmentation scale upon which they are weighed to the minutest "ounce" according to the amount of black/"bad" blood their bodies contain. Symbolically, white has always been equated with the pure, the good, while black, white's opposite, connotes evil. It is not surprising, then, that this theory has carried over to racial attitudes, but it has been done at the expense of the basic humanity of blacks. Eugene Horowitz notes: "Attitudes toward Negroes are now chiefly determined not by contacts with Negroes, but by contact with the prevalent attitude toward Negroes."⁷

Stereotypic depiction of blacks in American history and literature is a natural result of the history of that race in the United States. As Seymour L. Gross points out in his introduction to Images of the Negro in American Literature:

Being from the beginning a figure of moral debate and historical controversy, the anomaly in a democratic society from whose accusing presence we could not flee except through chromatic fantasies, the Negro has always been more of a formula than a human being.⁸

It does not require much knowledge of Black American history to realize that the slaves were treated as non-human. To justify

his treatment of the black man, the white American had to clutch at reasons which "justified"--for him, anyway--one human being treating another as chattel. His chief rationalization consisted of considering the black sub-human.

As the racial pulse of the country quickened, the white man invented other reasons to "justify," once again, his continued mistreatment of other human beings: some of these insisting that blacks possessed no souls, that blacks were happy under the existing arrangement, and that blacks wanted, needed, and indeed depended upon his guidance for survival. Only something less than human, a "formula," could be treated with as much coldness and callousness because, as David Krech and Richard Crutchfield point out,

the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth would support prejudice far less effectively than the part-truth, the half-truth, and error with the truth. Human events are almost always ambiguous, and our preconceived notions assign them the proper interpretation.⁹

Stereotypes tend to reinforce these half-truth attitudes--taken by themselves, they are considered "evidence" by some people of the inferiority of others. And, "for many people this is all the evidence they ever have, for they lack contact with the minority groups themselves."¹⁰

What, precisely, is a stereotype? Webster's Dictionary defines a stereotype as "an unvarying form or pattern; fixed or conventional expression, notion, character, mental pattern, etc., having no individuality, as though cast from a mold; as, the Negro is too often portrayed as a stereotype."¹¹ But, the

meanings of the terms prejudice and stereotyping are similar; the distinction needs to be made by a sociologist. An excellent differentiation is provided by Nathan Ackerman and Marie Jahoda:

Prejudice. . . is a term applied to categorical generalizations based on inadequate data and without sufficient regard for individual differences. . . . But inherent in the process of forming prejudgments is the danger of stereotyped thinking. The stereotype is distinguished from the prejudgment only by a greater degree of rigidity. Prejudgment occurs where facts are not available. But stereotyping is a process which shows little concern for the facts even when they are available.

Prejudice in its narrowest sense is distinct from prejudgment and stereotyping. It is a subcategory of prejudgment and it uses stereotyping but it is not identical with either. In the psychological context. . . , prejudice is a pattern of hostility in interpersonal relations which is directed against an entire group, or against its individual members; it fulfills a specific irrational function for its bearer.¹²

An important function of the stereotype is that it serves as a kind of shorthand for the author. He can, in a minimum of words, achieve a desired effect, create a certain atmosphere, authenticate a scene. Stereotypes are, in addition, an easy way of explaining things; they "take less effort and give an appearance of order without the difficult work that understanding the true order of things demands."¹³ Moreover, stereotypic characters are excellent for throwing contrasting virtues and vices of major characters into high relief. By appealing to the masses, though, stereotypes detrimentally hold the person being stereotyped in the low position it sees him in.

Before our detailed categorization of black stereotypes, it would be beneficial to include Guy B. Johnson's summary of the major elements in the American stereotype of the black, for it represents most comprehensively the majority of white America's attitude toward and understanding of the black.

One might compile a catalogue of 'What Every White Man Thinks He Knows about Negroes.' Its main themes would be as follows: The Negro is lazy. He will not work if he can get out of it. He cannot manage complicated machinery because he cannot give it sustained attention and will fall asleep. He is dirty, 'smelly,' careless of his personal appearance. He is fond of loud colors and flashy clothing. He is less inhibited than the white man, is more given to loud laughter and boisterous talk. He is a natural-born clown and mimic. He is endowed with an inordinate sexual passion which overrides all considerations of modesty, chastity, and marital fidelity. He has no sense of time, never gets anywhere on time. He does not know the value of a dollar and will spend his money on 'foolishness' and then beg for the necessities of life. Even when he acquires property, he cannot take care of it. He is very gullible and is a great 'joiner.' He will join anything which promises a good time or a big noise or gives him a chance to 'show off.' He is naturally religious, but his religion is all feeling, emotion, and superstition. He believes in ghosts, spirits, voodoo charms, and magic formulae. His mind works like a child's mind. His thoughts are shallow, his associations flimsy and superficial. His emotions are powerful but fickle. He is given to high criminality because he has no respect for life or property or morality and cannot control his impulses. He is incapable of appreciating the deeper values of white civilization, is incapable of self-government, and therefore must have the supervision and guidance of the white man.¹⁴

Black characters have been stereotyped both intentionally and unintentionally by objective and prejudiced writers alike. George Simpson identifies the common black stereotypes as the contented slave, the comic Negro of the minstrel shows, the wretched freedman, the brute Negro, the tragic mulatto, and the

exotic primitive.¹⁵ Clues to look for when determining an author's treatment of a black character are the names of the characters--often demeaning; physical appearances--often incorporating animal imagery (keep in mind that skin color and bodily configurations of blacks "combine to form a unique symbolic value system in American society"²⁶); and the comic dimension--because "black skin and thick lips historically have been considered ludicrous."¹⁷ In Black Portraiture in American Fiction, Catherine Juanita Starke is a little broader in her categorization of the stereotyped/stock blacks. She divides them into three groups:

Stock blacks, examined in three configurational patterns, have reflected images of blacks and patterns of relatedness that whites could accept, reject, or ignore without qualm of conscience or depth of emotional response. In all patterns black characters were devalued in ways that helped whites overvalue themselves. For example, in portraits of accommodationists, authors emphasized ignorant speech patterns, gullibility, cowardice, and animal-like physical descriptions in contrast with white figures whose portraits contain few, if any, of these characteristics. In the image running counter to this pattern, authors overridealized the accommodative blacks, revealing opposition to prevailing white attitudes at an early stage of black portraiture in American literary history. In the second stock pattern, the brute, authors vilified as prurient beasts those blacks who, because they defied prescribed rituals of race relations, deserved their punishment of torture and mutilation. Such portraits could be accepted with feelings of righteous indignation. The third stock pattern contains ludicrous inferiors, the buffoons or clowns, whom authors have made, for the most part, shallow, vain, trivial, inept, and irresponsible. By all of these stock patterns, audience response was channeled toward disdainful toleration, derision, sentimental adulation, or virulent hatred of a particular character. Whatever the response--laughter, tears, hisses--the characters' portraits were de-

signed to corroborate and justify white supremacy. Persistence of such stock figures well into the twentieth century indicates the deep-rooted tenacity with which the culture has clung to this self-concept¹⁸ (*italics mine*).

We can learn quite a lot about authors who incorporate stereotypic characters. Because stereotypes are "a compound of error, exaggeration, omission, and half-truth. . . they tell more about the people who believe them, the needs of the group in which they circulate, than about the group to which they are supposed to refer."¹⁹ Similarly, Sterling Brown concludes that stereotyping "indicates the skill that human beings have in interpreting almost any phenomenon so that it reinforces their established beliefs"²⁰--just as Starke points out above that they "corroborate and justify white supremacy."²¹ Brown cautions, furthermore, that when "generalizations are drawn [from stereotypes] about a race or a section, the author oversteps his bounds as novelist, and becomes an amateur social scientist whose guesses are valueless, and even dangerous"²²--dangerous because these attitudes are transferred to children in the socialization process, incorporated into their beliefs (intentionally or unintentionally) during the formative years, making them unwitting conspirators in the continuance of unjustified racial bigotry. Therefore, the most devastatingly inhuman result of the continued use of the black stereotype is the prolonged psychological lynching of the Negro. Ralph Ellison summarizes the results of black stereotypy as follows:

. . . [it] conditions the reader to accept the less worthy values of society, and it serves to

justify and absolve our sins of social irresponsibility. With unconscious irony it advises stoic acceptance of those conditions of life which it so accurately describes and which it pretends to reject. . . . Perhaps the object of the stereotype is not so much to crush the Negro as to console the white man.²³

Hemingway's Literary Purpose--"Writing Truly"

It should be made clear that Ernest Hemingway is not a literary spokesman for or proponent of social causes; he deserves no such accolades which, in that respect, are reserved for writers like Steinbeck. To present him as such is not the purpose of this thesis. To reiterate, the reasons for examining Hemingway's work are: 1) it is considered fairly "pedestrian" in that it records exactly what he sees--whether that sight is a bullfight in Madrid, an instance of racial hostility, or a wounded lion in Africa--and to present it as "truly" as he knows how; 2) because he neither denounces nor defends prejudice, his work is valuable as an accurate recording of contemporary attitudes; and 3) the work offers insight into an, as yet, unexplored area of Hemingway's writing--his portraiture of blacks.

In 1932, Hemingway wrote, "let those who want to save the world if you can get to see it clear and as a whole, . . . The great thing is to last and get your work done and see and hear and learn and understand; and write when there is something that you know."²⁴ John Atkins notes that "it has become customary first of all to praise Hemingway for being an accurate reporter of an epoch and then to attack him because his reports

were not always to so-and-so's liking."²⁵ He continues, "Hemingway put down what he saw, just as Conrad did, and also what he heard. His subject was society, and although he influenced society or a section of it this was a by-product, for his intention had been artistic not moralistic."²⁶

A legitimate question might be, "to what extent is an artist responsible to his public, i.e. society, for writing lessons in moralism?" This seems to be at the root of much of the criticism levelled against Hemingway's fiction. For those who believe that an author's sole responsibility rests in social presentations which might result in social betterment, the charge against Hemingway of "social irresponsibility" may seem justified. If, on the other hand, an artist's responsibility depends upon whatever it is he has to offer that will provide aesthetic appreciation, technical awareness, or social betterment or understanding, then the charge of "social irresponsibility" is irrelevant, because, as John Atkins reminds us, "the basis of Hemingway's early writing is a total renunciation of all social frameworks; the separation of the writer from the common activity of his time; the acceptance of a profound isolation as the basis for the writer's achievement."²⁷ It seems to me that an artist should not be criticized on the basis of what the critic expects from him, but solely upon the basis of whether that artist accomplishes what he set out to do. This notion of an artist's responsibility is handled very well by Carlos Baker, who concludes

that "no artist of our time has been more responsible than Hemingway":

A conspicuous irony in the present age is the recurrent notion that Hemingway's name belongs on the list of irresponsibles. During the course of his career this accusation twice erupted, once in the early thirties, and again in 1950. What it meant, it seems, was that Hemingway was 'socially irresponsible' because he had failed to carry the banner of a particular social group, and to write his novels in terms of a particular social program. To be responsible in this sense he would have had to commit his writing to some form of didacticism, and to hope that history would bear out his interpretation of history. When an artist as an artist is not disposed to assume this kind of responsibility and even goes so far as to imply that those who do are not being faithful to their duty as writers, a degree of unpopularity is probably inevitable for him. . . .

If, on the other hand, one defines the artist's social responsibility as the presentation of the reality of man's experience, no artist of our time has been more responsible than Hemingway, both to his art itself, and to the strong foundation of esthetic and moral conviction on which the art is built. . . the poet is not responsible to society for a version of what it thinks it is or what it wants. For what is the poet responsible? He is responsible for the virtue proper to him as poet, for his special arete: for the mastery of a disciplined language which will not shun the full report of the reality conveyed to him by his awareness: he must hold, in Yeats' great phrase, 'reality and justice in a single thought.'

. . . Hemingway's proper virtue as an artist consists in the willing assumption of a responsibility to hold the reality of what is knowably real in steady conjunction with the justice of what is esthetically just.²⁸

Keeping in mind, then, that Hemingway's ultimate purpose is artistic rather than moralistic, we can turn to a detailed examination of his depiction of blacks.

Blacks in Hemingway's Short Stories

Hemingway wrote most of his short stories early in his career, during the mid-to-late 1920s, before critical attention became prevalent concerning minority portraiture in literature. His depiction of blacks, then, is probably representative of the typical ways in which they were then being handled by white writers. Anything more than a flat stereotype by a white writer would have been the exception rather than the rule, and, although relatively few of his stories contain black characters, only a few of those portrayed are actually straight stereotypes. In many cases, the blacks in Hemingway's fiction appear stereotypic but one finds it difficult to categorize a character strictly as one type or another, and for two reasons. First, the references to blacks are generally brief; sometimes they are simply referred to by a second party. Secondly, although technically stereotypes, some are admirable, noble, and/or knowledgable. In some cases, a character will straddle two or even three categories. In general, though, black characters in the short stories can be grouped into four stereotypic categories: 1) background figures, 2) servitude figures, 3) 'honorable' blacks, and 4) brutes.

Background Figures

Three of Hemingway's short stories--"A Canary for One," "Light of the World," and "Night Before Battle"--contain blacks used almost exclusively as stereotypic background figures. Since Hemingway includes only the absolutely essential, it is

not surprising that he utilizes the "shorthand" convenience of the stereotype, especially in his stories.

In "A Canary for One," a train pulls into a station in Paris:

On the station platform were negro soldiers. They wore brown uniforms and were tall and their faces shone, close under the electric light. Their faces were very black and they were too tall to stare. The train left Avignon station with the negroes standing there. A short white sergeant was with them.²⁹

In addition to recognizing the existence of black soldiers in Europe, this passage emphasizes the stature of the soldiers compared to their sergeant. Twice the soldiers in this brief excerpt are referred to as "tall," then the train pulls away from the station and, almost as an afterthought, Hemingway adds the short white sergeant. The mental picture received is one of tall, erect, noble, very black soldiers juxtaposed against the short white sergeant--it may well be that Hemingway is presenting a consciously ironic situation reminiscent of the all-powerful white "overseer" in reverse.

In "The Light of the World" the treatment is more directly severe. A whore nicknamed Peroxide is standing up for Steve Ketchel, a fighter whom she is bragging about being in love with. A man asks,

'Didn't Jack Johnson knock him out though?'
'It was a trick,' Peroxide said. 'That big dinge took him by surprise. He'd just knocked Jack Johnson down, the big black bastard. That nigger beat him by a fluke. . . Steve knocked him down. . . he turned to smile at me.'
'I thought you said you weren't on the coast,'
some one said.

'I went out just for that fight. Steve turned to smile up at me and that black son of a bitch from hell jumped up and hit him by surprise. Steve could lick a hundred like that black bastard.'³⁰

James J. Martine identifies the Steve Ketchel of the story as actually Stanley Ketchel, who was considered America's "greatest Hope in the quest for a White Hope in fighting circles."³¹ This gains significance if one notices that throughout the story, Steve Ketchel is referred to as "white" and "whitest." The situation is also what the story pivots around. Perhaps, in writing of an actual upset, Hemingway--an avid boxing fan--is voicing his own opinion of the black fighter through Peroxide. However, within the context of the story, Peroxide is obviously a liar, cornered by people accusing her of lying about Steve Ketchel. She tries to justify Ketchel's losing a fight to a black by saying she was there and distracted him. In her over-protesting, she curses the black who beat Ketchel. Significantly, though, the bad after-taste from this passage concerns Peroxide rather than Jack Johnson.

The third story incorporating blacks as background figures is "Night Before Battle," a story set in Madrid, the evening before a battle. Henry and Al are sitting in a bar; two whores are seated at a table.

'There's the two Moor girls from Ceuta at that corner table.' He looked over at them. They were both dark and bushy headed. One was large and one was small and they certainly both looked strong and active.

'No,' said Al. 'I'm going to see plenty Moors

tomorrow without having to fool with them
tonight.'³²

Why mention the two whores in the first place, if the men are to reject the idea? Not only do whores serve as realistic background in a bar frequented by soldiers, but the whores being black also suggests the sexually potent aspect associated with the stereotype. More importantly, this situation exemplifies the practice of the soldiers killing the Moors by daytime and lying with their women at night.

Servitude Figures

Three stories contain blacks filling mostly servitude or menial roles: "Fifty Grand," "The Snows of Kilimanjaro," and "The Killers." The characters in these stories are a rubber (massager), native servants, and a cook in a diner. "Fifty Grand," a story about another prizefighter, contains a single black with two lines:

Hogan said good-by to us and Bruce, the nigger rubber, drove us down to the train in the cart.

'Good-by, Mr. Brennan,' Bruce said at the train. 'I sure hope you knock his can off.'

'So long,' Jack said. He gave Bruce two dollars. Bruce had worked on him a lot. He looked kind of disappointed. Jack saw me looking at Bruce holding the two dollars.

'It's all in the bill,' he said. 'Hogan charged me for the rubbing.'³³

Although sketchy, the character is not treated negatively; it is obvious that Jack is handing Bruce a tip he knows is insufficient which forces the reader to admit mistreatment of him. The only thing perhaps degrading in Hemingway's treatment

of Bruce is his respectfully calling Jack Mr. Brennan, echoing the servant/master relationship, although it might be not out of his role as a servitude black but out of actual respect for the fighter.

Turning to "The Snows of Kilimanjaro," we find Harry and his wife, Helen, trapped on an African plain, awaiting rescue. Harry's wounded leg has gangrened and he is rapidly approaching death. The African scene is authenticated with a handful of native servants caring for and administering to Harry. Searching for a reason, Helen asks, "What have we done to have that happen to us?"³⁴ Harry replies,

'I suppose what I did was to forget to put iodine on it when I first scratched it. Then I didn't pay any attention to it because I never infect. Then, later, when it got bad, it was probably using that weak carbolic solution when the other antiseptics ran out that paralyzed the minute blood vessels and started the gangrene.' He looked at her, 'What else?'

'I don't mean that.'

'If we would have hired a good mechanic instead of a half baked kikuyu driver, he would have checked the oil and never burned out that bearing in the truck.'³⁵

This is obviously a dying man groping for reasons to explain his situation. The fact that he first credits it to his forgetting to apply iodine to his scratch, before cursing the black driver, indicates that he does not really blame the driver; he is simply relieving tension by bad-mouthing him (as well as everyone else). If their being stranded is a result of the negligence of the driver, that negligence is minor compared to Harry's.

"The Killers" is one of Hemingway's better-known stories. Malcolm Cowley notes the "hard-boiled"³⁶ manner of the prose style which complements the violence in the work. Other critics as well have referred to "Fifty Grand" and "The Killers" as the most violent of Hemingway's stories. "The Killers" opens at a lunch counter where Nick Adams, presumably in his late teens, is talking to the waiter, George, when two professional hit-men enter. They order Nick back into the kitchen with Sam, the black cook, where they are tied and gagged, and inform the men of their intention to kill an ex-prizefighter named Ole Andreson who usually eats at the diner in the evening. When it becomes apparent that Ole is not going to show up that night,

. . . the two of them went out the door. George watched them, through the window, pass under the arc-light and cross the street. In their tight overcoats and derby hats they looked like a vaudeville team. George went back through the swinging-door into the kitchen and untied Nick and the cook.

'I don't want any more of that,' said Sam, the cook. 'I don't want any more of that.'

'. . . Listen,' George said to Nick. 'You better go see Ole Andreson.'

'All right.'

'You better not have anything to do with it at all,' Sam, the cook, said. 'You better stay way out of it.'

'Don't go if you don't want to,' George said.

'Mixing up in this ain't going to get you anywhere,' the cook said. 'You stay out of it.'

'I'll go see him,' Nick said to George.

'Where does he live?'

The cook turned away.

'Little boys always know what they want to do,' he said.³⁷

Nick goes to Ole to warn him, finding that Ole is unwilling

to escape his pursuers. He is through with running and has resigned himself to simply waiting for the men to show up: "There isn't anything I can do about it, . . . there ain't anything to do."³⁸ Returning to the diner, George inquires about Ole.

' . . . He's in his room and he won't go out.'
The cook opened the door from the kitchen when he heard Nick's voice.
'I don't even listen to it,' he said and shut the door.³⁹

Nick relates Ole's position to George, concluding that, "I can't stand to think about him waiting in the room and knowing he's going to get it. It's too damned awful." George replies, "Well, you better not think about it."⁴⁰

Some readers have failed to see the "point" of "The Killers." By studying the characterization, though, one cannot fail to interpret it as being Nick's story. Sam is not the only stereotype. Notice the "killers" themselves--described above as wearing "tight overcoats and derby hats. . . looking like a vaudeville team."⁴¹ These stereotypes serve to throw the focus upon Ole only briefly, but upon Nick heavily. Philip Young insists that the "point" of the story

consists of the boy's reaction to this somewhat sickening situation. Hemingway delineated three distinct responses: the cook (who, being colored and a short-order cook to boot, presumably has trouble enough of his own) wants nothing whatsoever to do with it; George, the counterman in the diner, is more affected: 'It's a hell of a thing.' But it is of course the effect the incident has had on Nick that Hemingway was interested in. . . . Of the three reactions here it is George's which is probably 'average', Nick's is roughly as excessive as the cook's is deficient.⁴²

Yes, Sam's attitude, considered humanistically, is deficient; however, as Young points out above, he "is colored and a short-order cook to boot, presumably [with] trouble enough of his own."⁴³ Granted, it is certainly a passive, a defeatist attitude, but--for him, anyway--the only practical and realistic attitude considering the fact that even Ole admits that the police are powerless, and the attitude which both George and Nick almost come around to in the final sentences of the story, since Nick resolves to "get out of this town."⁴⁴ Sam, then, is the only character who--although presented as a stereotype--is certain enough of his own attitudes to react in a way in which he will not be hurt. His attitude is also understandable because, as Kathryn Cowan points out in Black/White Stereotypes in the Fiction of Richard Wright, James Baldwin and Ralph Ellison, "intellect is a kind of racial curse, since the worst thing that can happen to a black man is to have both intellectuality and sensitivity. Such characteristics can only enhance his capacity for pain."⁴⁵

'Honorable' Blacks

The natives appearing in "The Short Happy Life of Francis Macomber" belong in a category by themselves. Although they are 'lumped together' within the story, with none receiving individualized attention, they, as a group, are admirable--perhaps more admirable than any of the other characters in the story. The story concerns an African safari in which there

are native gun-bearers. When Francis Macomber, the white man trying to fill his walls at home with animal heads, shoots his first lion, wounding it and causing it to retreat into tall grass, he

stood there feeling sick at his stomach, his hands that held the Springfield still cocked, shaking, and his wife and Robert Wilson were standing by him. Beside him too were the two gun-bearers chattering in Wakamba.

'I hit him,' Macomber said. 'I hit him twice.'

'You gut-shot him and you hit him somewhere forward,' Wilson said without enthusiasm. The gun-bearers looked very grave. They were silent now⁴⁶ (*italics mine*).

Wilson tells Macomber, "'Keep behind me and about five yards to the right and do exactly as I tell you.' Then he spoke in Swahili to the two gun-bearers who looked the picture of gloom. . . he could see the gun-bearer was suffering too with fear"⁴⁷ (*italics mine*). Nonetheless, the gun-bearers unhesitatingly perform their functions, acting stoic in the face of death, while Macomber "heard the blood-choked coughing grunt, and saw the swishing rush in the grass. The next thing he knew he was running; running wildly, in panic in the open, running toward the stream. . . while two black men and a white man looked back at him in contempt"⁴⁸ (*italics mine*). In this instance it is the guide, Wilson, and the gun-bearers who act professionally and in accordance with the famous 'Hemingway code.' Later, however, while chasing buffalo, the gun-bearer jumps off of the jeep when it seems that the men might shoot the buffalo they are chasing from the moving vehicle, an act which is illegal. Later he rejoins them:

. . . approaching them was the middle-aged gun-bearer, limping along in his knitted cap, khaki tunic, shorts and rubber sandals, gloomy-faced and disgusted looking⁴⁹ (*italics mine*).

Philip Young also recognizes the "visible disapproval of the native boys."⁵⁰

The natives are seen in various servitude roles throughout this story, such as carrying rifles, skinning out animal heads, tracking wounded animals, and preparing meals; however, they are not viewed negatively by Hemingway because, in the above instances, they adhere to the 'code ethic.' They are, however, viewed as sub-human by both Wilson, the guide, and Macomber. Two instances emphasize and reveal their attitudes toward the natives. First, Wilson would have us believe that the natives deserve whippings. Hearing Wilson snapping in Swahili at a native boy, Macomber asks what he told him.

Wilson replies:

'Nothing. Told him to look alive or I'd see he got about fifteen of the best.'

'What's that? Lashes?'

'It's quite illegal,' Wilson said. 'You're supposed to fine them.'

'Do you still have them whipped?'

'Oh, yes. They could raise a row if they chose to complain. But they don't. They prefer it to the fines.'

'How strange!' said Macomber.

'Not strange, really,' Wilson said. 'Which would you rather do? Take a good birching or lose your pay? . . . We all take a beating every day, you know, one way or another.'⁵¹

Mark Spilka and William Stein disagree in their interpretations of Wilson and this passage. Stein sees the "degrading identification of Wilson's principles with the ruthless and selfish

philosophy of British imperialism, in particular with the affectation of humanitarian interest in the fate of the regimented natives and cites as evidence Wilson's lashing of the natives and his upholding of the myth that 'no white man ever bolts.'⁵² But Spilka implies that "Wilson's illegal practice is more humane than fining the natives."⁵³ Virgil Hutton, however, concludes that "to uphold Mr. Spilka's position one must, like the Americans who lashed Negroes, believe that the natives are not members of the human race."⁵⁴

Turning to Macomber, despite his considering Wilson's lashings "strange!" (note here one of Hemingway's few exclamation points) he not much later, following the retreat of a wounded lion into tall grass, suggests sending the inadequately armed gun-bearers after the lion--a suggestion which Wilson wisely rejects, calling it "just a touch murderous."⁵⁵

Critics are beginning to recognize in Wilson qualities which have been consistently overlooked or ignored. For decades, Wilson was considered an example of the Hemingway 'code hero,' and categorized as admirable. Virgil Hutton, however, insists that, "it is time for Robert Wilson to be exposed and for Hemingway's unrelenting satire of Wilson to be recognized. Throughout the story, Wilson represents an unwitting hypocrite who harshly judges others on the basis of various strict and false codes that he himself does not follow."⁵⁶ He obviously practices illegal deeds three times--in lashing the natives, in chasing game from inside the jeep, and in covering for what he thinks is murder. Therefore, if

Wilson has been unveiled as a hypocrite, then who in the story, if anyone, is admirable? Francis Macomber has certainly acted cowardly and unprofessionally, and his wife, Margot, is under grave suspicion at the close of the story of being a murderess. That leaves the native gun-bearers who, although admittedly frightened at times, act according to their duty, and honorably, throughout the story, despite the fact that the white characters consider them and treat them as something less than human.

Brutes

Categorizing Bugs--the black companion in "The Battler"--is difficult as he straddles categories like brute, savage, admirable companion, and servitude depending on the reader's point of view. Most critics agree, however, on the violent nature of Bugs. At any rate, he endures as an unforgettable 'individual.' In this story, Nick Adams, after being thrown from a train he has hitched a ride on, comes across a campsite in a wooded area. At this campsite he meets an ex-prizefighter, Ad Francis, a man 'crazed' from too much fighting and subject to violent 'spells.' His travelling companion, a black named Bugs, feeds and befriends Nick. When Ad asks to see Nick's knife, Bugs warns him to keep it to himself. Ad begins to lose control.

'You won't get out of it that way. You're going to take a beating, see? Come on and lead at me.'

'Cut it out,' Nick said.

'All right, then, you bastard.'

The little man looked down at Nick's feet.

As he looked down the negro, who had followed behind him as he moved away from the fire, set himself and tapped him across the base of the skull. He fell forward and Bugs dropped the cloth-wrapped blackjack on the grass. The little man lay there, his face in the grass. The negro picked him up, his head hanging, and carried him to the fire. His face looked bad, the eyes open. Bugs laid him down gently.

'Will you bring me the water in the bucket, Mister Adams,' he said. 'I'm afraid I hit him just a little hard. . . I didn't know how well you could take care of yourself and, anyway, I didn't want you to hurt him or mark him up no more than he is.'

The negro smiled again.

'You hurt him yourself.'

'I know how to do it. He won't remember nothing of it. I have to do it to change him when he gets that way.'⁵⁷

While Ad is "out," Bugs explains to Nick how he and Ad met in jail.

' . . . He was busting people all the time after she [Ad's sister] went away and they put him in jail. I was in for cuttin' a man.'

He smiled, and went on soft-voiced:

'Right away I liked him and when I got out I looked him up. He likes to think I'm crazy and I don't mind. I like to be with him and I like seeing the country and I don't have to commit no larceny to do it. I like living like a gentleman.'⁵⁸

Phrases like "Nick knew from the way he walked that he was a negro,"⁵⁹ and "in a low, smooth, polite nigger voice,"⁶⁰ as well as animal imagery such as "crouching on long nigger legs over the fire,"⁶¹ stand out as derogatory. Simply his name--Bugs--is degrading. Critics consistently view the situation as sinister. Jackson Benson recognizes "the atmosphere of perversion and potential violence"⁶² of the campsite, while Richard Hovey calls it "an atmosphere of threatening evil."⁶³ Hovey also comments on the "ambiguities of the

incest motive"⁶⁴--we are not certain whether the woman who lived with Ad Francis was actually his sister. If there is ambiguity regarding the incest motive, there seems to be no doubt among critics that Bugs is a homosexual.

Richard Hovey calls Bugs "curiously solicitous,"⁶⁵ "overpolite,"⁶⁶ and notes that the way in which he handles Ad suggests "that his own relationship with Francis is not normal."⁶⁷ Likewise, Philip Young agrees, noting the "very discomfoting and oily courtesy which Bugs shows Ad,"⁶⁸ and the "unctuousness with which he addresses 'Mister Francis,' waiting on him with obsequious, ironic servility."⁶⁹ Curiously, though, in no critical assessment of the story does a critic label Ad Francis a homosexual--only Bugs receives that label--which is perhaps an interesting commentary on the prejudice or single-vision of the critics.

For Hemingway, homosexuality is a serious evil; it makes sense, then, to interpret a black homosexual (with black connoting evil) as a sort of "double negative." However, the reader must not overlook the fact that Bugs, within the context of the story, is superior to and in control of Ad. One cannot help questioning whether Hemingway intends to present Bugs as more humanistic than his white companion, whether he intends to reverse the traditional subservient positions of the white and black men. Because homosexuality, even today, carries with it negative connotations, it must be pointed out that whatever the relationship is between Bugs and Ad, Bugs is more likeable than Ad--he acts out of love

and concern for him. His knocking Ad out is an act of consideration for Nick and compassion for his friend. As a friend, he functions as a bodyguard for Ad, explaining that he "didn't want Nick to hurt him or mark him [Ad] up no more than he was."⁷⁰ And he is considerate to Nick, whom he has just met. When Nick leaves the camp, he finds that Bugs has even been thoughtful enough to have given him a ham sandwich to tide him over until he reaches the nearest town.

Through this use of homosexuality, Hemingway has (perhaps unconsciously) transcended racial boundaries--even though the image echoes of the sexual potency myth of the black, Hemingway admits through this situation the possibility of love relationships between blacks and whites.

The Black in Hemingway's Play

Hemingway's little-known, poorly-written play, The Fifth Column, published in 1938, contains a black woman, Anita, who is referred to quite often as a "Moorish tart from Cueta,"⁷¹ as well as "Black Beauty."⁷² She is described as "very dark, but well built, kinky-haired and tough looking, and not at all shy."⁷³ Because this is the largest role for a black in any of Hemingway's work, she deserves careful consideration despite the failure of the play itself.

The play, set in Madrid, is one of espionage and counter-espionage during the Spanish Civil War. Its sub-plot is a love triangle consisting of Philip, a member of Stalinist army intelligence, Dorothy Bridges, a Vassar graduate and

correspondent for Cosmopolitan, and Anita. Anita and Dorothy serve as excellent contrast for each other with Anita's dark skin juxtaposed against the blonde Dorothy, as well as with Anita's pidgin English thrown into high relief by Dorothy's 'cultivated,' refined language.

Anita is immediately recognized as unpretentious, businesslike. When she discovers Philip with Dorothy, she resents his double-talk:

MOORISH TART. Listen. All time talk. No time anything else. What we do here?

To Philip

You with me? Yes or no?

PHILIP. You put things so flatly, Anita.

MOORISH TART. Want a answer.⁷⁴

Philip rejects her, causing her to think he considers her a spy. She asks if Dorothy is replacing her, and later discusses her relationship with Philip in a lengthy scene, much of which is significant in a variety of ways:

ANITA. Listen, you don't want make mistake now with that big blonde.

PHILIP. You know, Anita. I'm afraid I do. I'm afraid that's the whole trouble. I want to make an absolutely colossal mistake. . .

ANITA. Be colossal all right.

PHILIP. You're not jealous?

ANITA. No. I just hate. Last night I try to like. I say hokay everybody a comrade. Comes a big bombardment. Maybe everybody killed. Should be comrades everybody with each other. Bury the axes. Not be selfish. Not be egotistic. Love a enemy like a self. All that slop.

PHILIP. You were terrific.

ANITA. That kind a stuff don't last over night. This morning I wake up. First thing I do I hate that woman all day long.

PHILIP. You mustn't, you know.

ANITA. What she want with you? She take a man just like you pick a flowers. She don't want. She just pick to put in her room. She just like

you because you big, too. Listen. I like you if you dry up and be ugly. I like you if you hunchback.

PHILIP. Hunchbacks are lucky.

ANITA. I like you if you unlucky hunchback. I like you if you got no money. You want? I make it.

PHILIP. That's about the only thing I haven't tried on this job.

ANITA. I not joke. I'm a serious. Philip, you leave her alone. You come back where you know is hokay.

PHILIP. I'm afraid I can't, Anita.

ANITA. You just try. Isn't any change. You like before, you like again. Always works that way when a man is a man.

PHILIP. But you see I change. It's not that I mean to.

ANITA. You no change. I know you good. I know you long time now. You not the kind that change.

PHILIP. All men change.

ANITA. Is not the truth. Is get tired, yes. Is want to go away, yes. Is run around, yes. Is get angry, yes, yes. Is treat bad, yes, plenty. Is change? No. Only is to start different habits. Is a habit is all. Right away is the same with whoever.

PHILIP. I see that. Yes, that's right. But you see it's this sort of running into some one from your own people, and it upsets you.

ANITA. Is not from your own people. Is not like you. Is a different breed of people.

PHILIP. No, it's the same sort of people.

ANITA. Listen, that big blonde make you crazy already. This soon you can't think good. Is no more the same as you as blood and paint. Is look same. Can a blood. Can a paint. All right. Put the paint in the body, instead of blood. What you get? American woman.

PHILIP. You're unjust to her, Anita. Granted she's lazy and spoiled, and rather stupid, and enormously on the make. Still she's very beautiful, very friendly, and very charming and rather innocent--and quite brave.

ANITA. Hokay. Beautiful? What you want with beautiful when you're through? I know you. Friendly? Hokay, is friendly can be unfriendly. Charming? Yes. Is a charming like the snake with rabbits. Innocent? You make me laugh. Ha, ha, ha. Is a innocent until a prove the guilty. Brave? Brave? You make me laugh again if I have any laugh left in my belly. Brave? All right. I laugh. Ho, ho, ho. What you

do all the time this war you can't tell
ignorance from a brave? Brave? My this--

[She rises from the table and
slaps her behind]

So. Now I go.

PHILIP. You're awfully hard on her.

ANITA. Hard on her? I like to throw a hand
grenade in the bed where she sleeping right this
minute. I tell you true. Last night I try all
that stuff. All that sacrifice. All that giveup
you know. Now have one good healthy feeling.
I hate.⁷⁵

This scene between Anita and Philip is very significant. First of all, Anita is accurately analyzing Philip and is functioning almost as a therapist. She "knows that he is not the kind that changes," and that "this is just a change of habit." If her assessment seems insignificant, bear in mind that the ending of the play--when Philip realizes all of this for himself and does, indeed, return to Anita--confirms her acute perception and assessment not only of him, but of Dorothy as well.

More importantly, however, this scene is relevant because it is here that Hemingway comes as close to showing interracial humanism as in any of his fiction. Because of Anita's low-keyed summation of the issue, the point may easily be missed. Hemingway, through Anita, insists that love can transcend racial barriers. If he makes this observation, perhaps unconsciously, through Bugs in "The Battler," there is no question that the passage regarding "blood" and "paint" which Anita postulates is written "consciously" by Hemingway. Philip tells Anita that, regarding Dorothy, "it's this sort of running into some one from your own people, and it upsets

you."⁷⁶ To which Anita replies, "Is not from your own people. Is not like you. Is a different breed of people. . . is no more the same as you as blood and paint. Is look the same. Can a blood. Can a paint. All right. Put the paint in the body, instead of blood. What you get? American woman."⁷⁷ Anita's viewpoint is right; it is what is underneath the skin that counts.

Although Anita is correct, Philip ignores her warning and becomes involved with Dorothy. He admits to Dorothy at night that he loves her and would like to marry her, but afterwards instructs her to ignore anything he says at night.

Dorothy dreams of having a home and a family life with Philip--admirable as these sentiments are, Philip is a 'Hemingway hero' whose mission comes first, a mission based not on a love ethic, but on an ethic of destruction. Dorothy dreams of "sitting at the Ritz bar in Paris, sipping champagne cocktails"⁷⁸ with Philip, and of "going and living together and having a lovely time and being happy,"⁷⁹ whereas Anita recognizes the mission ethic in him and is willing to accept him under these conditions. Dorothy is not. Anita's selflessness is underscored when she offers to do anything Philip wants, and when she professes that she would love him even if he were "ugly" or an "unlucky hunchback."

What brings Philip to the realization that Dorothy is just a day-dream is the scene when she enters wearing a fox cape. He calculates the cost of the foxes (twelve hundred pesetas apiece):

PHILIP. That's one hundred and twenty days' pay for a man in the brigades. Let's see. That's four months. I don't believe I know any one who's been out four months without being hit-- or killed.

DOROTHY. But, Philip, it doesn't have anything to do with the brigades. I bought pesetas at fifty to the dollar in Paris.

PHILIP. [Coldly] Really?⁸⁰

But it does have everything to do with the brigades because the brigade, the war, is everything to Philip--it never ceases being first with him. Anita, not Dorothy, is the one who recognizes this. Soon after this, Philip tells Dorothy to "count him out."⁸¹

Under the pigmentation, Anita has asserted that she and Philip are alike; the only quality shared by Philip and Dorothy is their whiteness. Beneath the upper epidermal layer, where it counts, Anita is the woman for Philip. She is seen administering to him, and anticipating his needs with a selflessness shown by no other character in the play. She pours him a drink when he needs it, sits down and pats his head, smoothing his hair.

ANITA. You feel plenty bad. I know.

PHILIP. Want me to tell you a secret?

ANITA. Yes.

PHILIP. I never felt worse.⁸²

Obviously, it is Anita who realistically sympathizes with Philip's worries, his moods, and his needs. By the final curtain, Dorothy and Philip have definitely split, and Philip returns to his room where Anita is waiting.

The characters in this work are admittedly shallow. It would be difficult to argue strongly in support of any of them.

The play has never been considered a success, partially for that reason. Hemingway, himself, admitted, "I think The Fifth Column is probably the most unsatisfactory thing I ever wrote. . . ." ⁸³ The play does, however, contain the only substantial role for a black, and Anita is discovered to be the most pragmatic character in this work in that she assesses situations quickly and accurately, she truly cares for Philip, and she is ready to accept him under any circumstances--unpretentiously. The only critic who seems to have realized the charm and the potential in Anita's character is Richard Hovey. After lamenting the shallow characterization of Dorothy, he continues,

Not surprisingly, Hemingway is more at ease and alive in his treatment of Anita. She is another of his primitives, whose love is available and without consequences. Her earthy candor about herself and others is refreshing, and she speaks a marvelous pidgin English. ⁸⁴

At any rate, Anita is neither treated negatively nor as a stereotype in this work; rather, she stands out as perhaps the most distinguished individual in The Fifth Column.

Blacks in Hemingway's Novels

Depiction of blacks in Hemingway's novels is not much different from that in his short stories. Contrary to what might be expected, blacks within the novels are not utilized in any larger roles than those seen before. The only change is that the categories break down a bit differently. Also, within this section we will deal with Hemingway's "true" book, Green Hills of Africa, which is based upon actual experiences

and people.

The five categories of blacks within this section are:

- 1) comic blacks, 2) background figures, 3) honorable blacks,
- 4) sympathetic blacks, and 5) individuals.

Comic Blacks

Hemingway's first long work, The Torrents of Spring, was published in 1926. It is a parody of Sherwood Anderson's Dark Laughter, and, as such, the characters and events are purposely exaggerated. With a work such as Dark Laughter, Hemingway believed that Anderson "had let everybody down who believed in him,"⁸⁵ and that the quality of the work invited parodying. His reply, The Torrents of Spring, is whimsical in nature, described by Richard Hovey as "slapdash in manner, slapstick in its humor; zany is probably the best adjective for it."⁸⁶

Anderson ends his book with the rich, deep laughter of blacks which, as Philip Young explains, "is intended to suggest, in its primitive wisdom, a disparagement of the contrasted, frustrated whites."⁸⁷ Likewise, Hemingway concludes some of his chapters with Indian war whoops and black laughter; the conclusions of chapters V, VII, and VIII, which depict blacks, are purposely satirical. Chapters V and VIII emphasize the "pondering," and the "deep thought" presented throughout Anderson's work.

V. Outside on the street he looked up at the sign. BEST BY TEST, he read. They had the dope all right, he said. Was it true, though, that there had been a Negro cook? Just once, just

for one moment, when the wicket went up, he thought he had caught a glimpse of something black. Perhaps the chap was only sooty from the stove.⁸⁸

VIII. From out of the kitchen, through the wicket in the hall, came a high-pitched, haunting laugh. Scripps listened. Could that be the laughter of the Negro? He wondered.⁸⁹

A contentedly docile servitude stereotype is presented in the conclusion of chapter VII:

VII. Inside the beanery the black cook pushed up the wicket and looked through from the kitchen. 'Dey've gone off,' he chuckled. 'Gone off into the night. Well, well, well.' He closed the wicket softly. Even he was a little impressed.⁹⁰

This conclusion is also significant in the last statement being "even he was a little impressed"⁹¹ (italics mine). The emphasis here is on the cook's sexuality, implying that it would, indeed, require something extraordinary to impress him. James Smith, in From Symbol to Character: The Negro in American Fiction of the Twenties, recalls Malcolm Cowley's hyperbolic recommendation to the frustrated postwar tempers of "surrendering to natural forces"⁹² and notes that Cowley advises his contemporaries to "follow our mood wherever it may lead us, and meanwhile be heartened in our driftings by the laughter of the happy and unrepressed Negroes."⁹³ And Smith concludes that with blacks' spontaneity and harmony with nature, they suggest an alternative to the sterility of postwar America.⁹⁴ The amusement of the cook over the couple "gone off into the night" is in keeping with the spontaneity of the stereotype.

Bruce is a bartender at an Indian Club which Yogi visits. He is a delightful, humorous black, an ironically exaggerated stereotype who chuckles deeply, rolls his eyes, and, most importantly, possesses more "insight" than any of the others--the Indians or the white:

'How would some Dog's Head ale go?' asked the Indian.

'Fine,' Yogi said.

'Two Dog's Heads, Bruce,' the Indian remarked to the bartender. The bartender broke into a chuckle.

'What are you laughing at, Bruce?' the Indian asked.

The Negro broke into a shrill haunting laugh.

'I knowed it, Massa Red Dog,' he said. 'I knowed you'd ordah dat Dog's Head all the time.'⁹⁵

The scene continues in a zany manner when the Indians give some wampum to Yogi, reminding Bruce of the Indian's colossal mistake of selling Long Island; for once the joke is not on him. Furthermore, the Indians' contrived superiority is absurd when juxtaposed against Bruce's earthy, spontaneous humor. In this passage, it is Bruce who wins our affection.

Behind the bar, Bruce, the Negro bartender, had been leaning forward and watching the wampums pass from hand to hand. His dark face shone. Sharply, without explanation, he broke into high-pitched uncontrolled laughter. The dark laughter of the Negro.

Red Dog looked at him sharply. 'I say, Bruce,' he spoke sharply; 'your mirth is a little ill-timed.'

Bruce stopped laughing and wiped his face on a towel. He rolled his eyes apologetically.

'Ah, can't help it, Massa Red Dog. When I seen Mistah Skunk-Backhouse passin' dem wampums around I jess couldn't stand it no longa. Whad he wan sell a big town like New Yawk foh dem wampums for? Wampums! Take away yoah wampums!'

'Bruce is an eccentric,' Red Dog explained, 'but he's a corking bartender and a good-hearted

chap.'

'Youah right theah, Massa Red Dog,' the bartender leaned forward. 'I'se got a heart of puah gold.'

'He is an eccentric, though,' Red Dog apologized. 'The house committee are always after me to get another bartender, but I like the chap oddly enough.'

'I'm all right, boss,' Bruce said. 'It's just that when I see something funny I just have to laff. You know I don' mean no harm, boss.'

'Right enough, Bruce,' Red Dog agreed. 'You are an honest chap.'⁹⁶

Later, when the Indians learn that Yogi is not part Indian, they tell him to leave. Here we discover that Bruce has been "aware" of Yogi's "passing" all along:

Yogi went into the bright room, looked at the bar, where Bruce, the bartender, was regarding him, got his hat and coat, said goodnight to Skunk-Backwards, who asked him why he was leaving so early, and the outside trap-door was swung up by Bruce. As Yogi started down the ladder the Negro burst out laughing. 'I knowed it,' he laughed. 'I knowed it all de time. No Swede gwine to fool ole Bruce.'

Yogi looked back and saw the laughing black face of the Negro framed in the oblong square of light that came through the raised trap-door.⁹⁷

The scene ends with Bruce framed in a square of light, laughing--still superior, still the most "insightful." The joke, this time, has been on the white man. Thus, even though Hemingway is making fun of Dark Laughter, he is agreeing with it in this instance.

The conclusion of Chapter VII and the episodes involving Bruce, the bartender, are the only instances in Hemingway's work where blacks resort to dialect and here, of course, it is intentionally exaggerated to fit his purpose of pointing to the absurdity of Anderson's work. If not read within the

framework of the parody, however, the blacks--for instance, the cooks laughing through the wickets--seem stereotypic, especially Bruce's dialect and rolling eyes, when actually he is one of the more successful characterizations in the parody.

Background Figures

Three novels contain blacks used mainly for background, For Whom the Bell Tolls, Across the River and Into the Trees, and To Have and Have Not. The first two of these works contain only references to blacks, whereas To Have and Have Not presents actual black characters. However, the purposes and functions of the blacks in these three works justifies grouping them together.

Robert Jordan, in For Whom the Bell Tolls, relates to Maria and Pilar an incident from his childhood which involved the burning of a black (note throughout the passage that Pilar keeps interrupting, seeking to know whether the mob was drunk, in order to explain to herself how such a shocking thing could occur):

' . . . I was seven years old and going with my mother to attend a wedding in the state of Ohio. . . . In this town a Negro was hanged to a lamp post and later burned. It was an arc light. A light which lowered from the post to the pavement. And he was hoisted, first by the mechanism which was used to hoist the arc light but this broke--'

'A Negro,' Maria said. 'How barbarous!'

'Were the people drunk?' asked Pilar. 'Were they drunk thus to burn a Negro?'

'I do not know,' Robert Jordan said. 'Because I saw it only looking out from under the blinds of a window in the house which stood on the corner

where the arc light was. The street was full of people and when they lifted the Negro up for the second time--'

'If you had only seven years and were in a house, you could not tell if they were drunk or not,' Pilar said.

'As I said, when they lifted the Negro up for the second time, my mother pulled me away from the window, so I saw no more,' Robert Jordan said. 'But since I have had experiences which demonstrate that drunkenness is the same in my country. It is ugly and brutal.'

'You were too young at seven,' Maria said. 'You were too young for such things. I have never seen a Negro except in a circus. Unless the Moors are Negroes.'

'Some are Negroes and some are not,' Pilar said. 'I can talk to you of the Moors.'

'Not as I can,' Maria said. 'Nay, not as I can.'⁹⁸

Critics, like Philip Young, have consistently seen the "point" of the story, as Maria does, as being about Robert Jordan, rather than really being about the black. Hemingway is interested in the reader noting Jordan's reaction to the incident, because it seems--at least superficially--that the passage is more about Jordan, more about drunkenness, than about the burning itself. Jordan's reaction is important because, as Young notes, "if the point of this Negro-burning incident is missed there will not be much in the book to account for the discomfort the hero must overcome if he is to perform his task and blow his bridge."⁹⁹

The passage serves other functions in addition to this main one, however. For one thing, the reader witnesses Maria's immediate reaction to the story. Despite her shocking, violent rape at the hands of Moors, she can, nevertheless, feel compassion toward the black who was lynched and burned in

Jordan's childhood and does not feel any sense of justice in the event; in fact, she refers to it as "barbarous!" This passage thus serves as an excellent example of her humanity and compassion.

On the other hand, the incident is indicative of Jordan's lack of basic humanity. The manner in which he relates the incident is curiously devoid of any emotional descriptions; they are, instead, concrete, robot-like details--such as lamp post, arc light, the mechanism used to hoist the light, the blinds of a window, the house which stood on the corner--then, following the episode itself, the only further comment he offers concerns drunkenness, that it is "ugly" and "brutal." The only emotional reaction we see elicited from Jordan is this single term "brutal" which refers not so much to the incident in particular as to drunkenness in general.

The incident itself has the impact of an emotional time-bomb. What John Atkins notes about the fiction of Hemingway is very true, in that he often "presents a scene or an action and the reader completes it emotionally."¹⁰⁰ In this case, the emotional completion does not occur immediately because the reader is absorbed in the story line itself. In retrospect, however, it has the impact of a time-bomb in that we realize Jordan's reaction is atypical and almost inhuman--robot-like. Certainly Hemingway, whose favorite topic is 'man in the face of death,' was aware of the possibilities this situation presented; he must have been tempted to deal with the black man's viewpoint. To do so, however, would have

defeated his purpose of using the incident to exemplify Jordan's lack of compassion which is so vital to understanding his actions throughout the remainder of the novel. The impact is greater, perhaps, this way, when he forces the reader to "complete it emotionally." For the epigraph to For Whom the Bell Tolls emphasizes "the theme of brotherhood, of human solidarity, of the involvement of all men in a common humanity. . . ."101

An interesting aside to the incident is that Carlos Baker, in "The Spanish Tragedy," draws a parallel between Pilar's account of Pablo's lynch-mob action in the fascist village and a bullfight. He takes great pains to explain how Hemingway presents a "pictorial metaphor of the bullfight,"102 but fails to recognize the additional paralleling evident in the mob lynching and burning from Jordan's childhood, which would enhance his theory greatly. Unfortunately, the emotional impact of the incident seems to have gone unobserved.

In Across the River and Into the Trees, 1950, Renata asks her lover, Colonel Cantwell, to buy her a small Moor's head which will serve as protection for her following his impending death. She tells him,

'I would like that small Negro with the ebony face and the turban made of chip diamonds with the small ruby on the crown of the turban. I should wear it as a pin. Everyone wore them in the old days in this city and the faces were those of their confidential servants. I have coveted this for a long time, but I wanted you to give it to me.'103

She indicates its function when she later reminds Cantwell,

"we haven't asked for the little negro that will look after me."¹⁰⁴ And, when he buys it, she

unwrapped the small ebony negro's head and torso, and pinned it high on her left shoulder. It was about three inches long, and was quite lovely to look at if you liked that sort of thing. And if you don't you are stupid, the Colonel thought.¹⁰⁵

As did Othello, Cantwell has commanded forces and is in love with the daughter of a Venetian. Renata obviously equates the two, and Robert W. Lewis, in Hemingway on Love, recognizes the Othello references, explaining:

. . . the Moor's head is a direct remembrance of the Colonel as an Othello.

The soldiers who had raped Maria in For Whom the Bell Tolls and the soldier who had raped the Colonel's Italian guide's wife and daughter were all Moors. The erotic success of the Moors is hated by Iago as well as Jordan and the Italian guide. Their reactions vary from the infamy of Iago to the nurtured bitterness of the guide to the acceptance of Jordan and his rehabilitation through love of the victim. Desdemona's father likewise cannot understand how his daughter could betray herself and her family to the outlandish Moor. Her father thinks Othello has charmed her, and so he has, but not with a magic potion.¹⁰⁶

Later, Cantwell tells Renata that he is glad they are not Shakespeare's Othello and Desdemona, but the reference seems to be to the unsatisfactory ending of the love story rather than his being glad he is white, not black as Othello is.

By utilizing this Moor's head, Hemingway expects the reader to immediately recognize the sexual connotation reminiscent of the erotic potency myth of the black stereotype. He is, therefore, utilizing it as convenient shorthand. This theory of sexual symbolism is more obvious when the gifts

exchanged between the two are studied together. Renata's gift to Cantwell is a pair of emeralds which he carries around in his pocket, and, as Richard Hovey suggests, "since there are two of them and since one of the common synonyms for testicles is stones, Renata's gift involves sexual symbolism."¹⁰⁷

Furthermore, "in this Liebestraum, the green stones are a prescription or talisman against castration anxiety."¹⁰⁸ This theory is reinforced by her desire for a symbolic Moor's head--another 'prescription'--also representative of Cantwell's sexuality. The two gifts, then,--both Renata's ideas--serve to act as reinforcement of Cantwell's sexuality; part of her therapy of making him a 'whole' man in preparing him for death.

The third work in which blacks function mainly as background is To Have and Have Not, published in 1937. And, although there are 'real' black characters in this work, as opposed to mere references to them, it is this work which presents blacks most stereotypically and more degradingly than anything Hemingway wrote.

The main character, Harry Morgan, is not admirable--most certainly he is a self-centered bigot through whose eyes we get clearly distorted pictures and descriptions. He uses terms like 'nigger,' 'chink,'¹⁰⁹ and 'conch'¹¹⁰ liberally. The story opens with Harry Morgan at the Pearl of San Francisco Cafe in Cuba in the 1930s, when a car drives up to the cafe and two revolutionaries--one white and one black--jump out and begin shooting. Three men referred to as 'rich English Cubans,'¹¹¹ are killed. Although the revolutionaries are equally guilty of

the murders, Harry's final comment on the scene is indicative of his single-vision: "Some nigger."¹¹² Therefore, the main function of the black in this scene, as well as in the scenes to come, is to elicit responses from Morgan--responses which, for the most part, will be extremely prejudiced, emphasizing his single-vision.

As in the first scene, the action is crisp, fast-paced, and indicative of the action to come. The times are rough, the people angry, the underground working full-speed, and no one acts within the boundaries of the law--not even Harry Morgan, the 'hero.' Following the shootings, Harry is hired by Mr. Johnson for a deep-sea fishing expedition. They take Eddy, a rummy, along and a black man--who remains anonymous--for baiting purposes. The description of the black, through Morgan's eyes, is interesting.

The nigger came on board with the bait and we cast off and started out of the harbor, the nigger fixing on a couple of mackerel; passing the hook through their mouth, out the gills, slitting the side and then putting the hook through the other side and out, tying the mouth shut on the wire leader and tying the hook good so it couldn't slip and so the bait would troll smooth without spinning.

He's a real black nigger, smart and gloomy, with blue voodoo beads around his neck under his shirt, and an old straw hat. What he liked to do on board was sleep and read the papers. But he put on a nice bait and he was fast.

'Can't you put on a bait like that, captain?' Johnson asked me.

'Yes, sir.'

'Why do you carry a nigger to do it?'

'When the big fish run you'll see,' I told him.

'What's the idea?'

'The nigger can do it faster than I can.'

'Can't Eddy do it?'

'No, sir.'

'It seems an unnecessary expense to me.'

He'd been giving the nigger a dollar a day and the nigger had been on a rumba every night. I could see him getting sleepy already.

'He's necessary,' I said.¹¹³

In this passage, Harry, as an expert fisherman, recognizes the skill with which the man baits and appreciates his technical achievement. As a fisherman; then, Harry recognizes the good qualities of the man, but, as a white man, he reacts negatively to the black pigmentation. The line concerning the man's having been on a rumba every night is unnecessary, and further confirms Harry's bigotry. Within this short passage, Harry has commented on the black's superstitious nature (wearing the voodoo beads), his laziness, his love of dancing, and his sleepiness. Generally speaking, the first step toward the elimination of racial bigotry and prejudice is the recognition of individual talent. Because Morgan recognizes the black's talent for baiting, and because he then ignores that achievement, continuing to stereotype him, we realize how deeply entrenched Morgan's prejudicial attitudes are. Likewise, a bit later, he explains,

We settled down to troll. Eddy went forward and laid down. I was standing up watching for a tail to show. Every once in a while the nigger would doze off and I was watching him, too. I bet he had some nights.¹¹⁴

It is almost as though Morgan remembered that he had left out this additional stereotypic feature of the black in his previous passage. Kathryn Cowan is harshly critical--and rightly so--in her assessment of men like Harry Morgan:

They maintain attitudes of superiority in order to keep the 'nigger' in a subordinate position. They accept white stereotypical assumptions, like the Negro's laziness, fondness for gambling, irresponsibility, and hypersexuality. . . . Not only do they show the white ability to abstract the black man and treat all Negroes alike but also they manifest the typical Communist disregard for the individual, an unconcern which is not specifically anti-black. Still, because in their dealings with the Negro they refuse to recognize blacks as individual human beings, they are manipulators and deserve treatment. . . . as variants of the relentless white overseer.¹¹⁵

We have determined that Harry is obviously prejudiced and perceives blacks through stereotypic lenses. But his prejudice is not directed toward blacks alone. Harry makes a deal to transport a boatload of Chinese off the island. The men are down in the cabin of the boat when Harry tells Eddy, "I want to get them out as quick as I can. . . before they smell up the cabin."¹¹⁶ Harry is not an admirable character; not only is he bigoted, he has just killed a Chinese man, Mr. Sing, "to keep from killing twelve other chinks,"¹¹⁷ and he has no remorse whatever for committing murder.

In Part II of the novel, Harry and a black man--whose name is Wesley, but who is referred to more often by Harry as 'nigger'--are running rum between Cuba and the Florida Keys illegally. Both men have been shot and are suffering. Curiously, in this situation Morgan is almost sympathetic. He tells Wesley, "I'm going to fix you up good. . . you just lay quiet."¹¹⁸ Wesley replies,

'You ain't going to fix me up,' the nigger said.

. . . Morgan said nothing then because he liked the nigger and there was nothing to do now

but hit him, and he couldn't hit him.¹¹⁹

Wesley asks Harry,

'Why they run liquor now?' . . . Prohibition's over. Why they keep up a traffic like that? Whyn't they bring the liquor in on the ferry?'

The man steering was watching the channel closely.

'Why don't people be honest and decent and make a decent honest living?'¹²⁰

That is the point of the entire work--nobody is being honest and decent, or making a clean living--especially Harry Morgan. But Morgan's attitude toward Wesley is changing somewhat. Morgan, despite his wound, has been dumping the liquor over the side of the boat when Wesley apologizes for not helping him.

'Mr. Harry,' said the nigger, 'I'm sorry I couldn't help dump that stuff.'

'Hell,' said Harry, 'ain't no nigger any good when he's shot. You're a all right nigger, Wesley.'¹²¹

Harry is still reacting out of his prejudice, but it is melting somewhat while being confronted with the guilt of this man's wound on his conscience--the wound not of an enemy but of a partner. He has been forced to react to Wesley as a wounded comrade rather than as a stereotypic black.

At this point, Harry appears to be undergoing a somewhat slow but healthy change in attitude. His touch of humanity is shortlived, however, because when considering another run, Harry insists that he "can't take no rummy nor no nigger. I got to have somebody I can depend on."¹²² Apparently, his prejudice returned at the same rate his wound was healing.

No further reference is made to Wesley, with whom he had developed a type of comradeship; rather, he begins to generalize again according to his deeply-entrenched, despicable habits.

Harry feels he is absolutely trapped--although he isn't--into resorting to illegal methods to support his family; therefore, he justifies his actions and proceeds without guilt, without hesitation, without remorse. He has become completely hardened to any feelings of compassion or comradeship (with the sole exception of his wife, Marie), and is simply 'looking out for number one' throughout the remainder of the book. His reverting to old attitudes in which he is uplifted as a result of his degradation of others, is in keeping with his personality. If the blacks are portrayed in this work as stereotypes, they are done so through the eyes and attitudes of an extremely bigoted, self-centered, white murderer.

Honorable Blacks

The Sun Also Rises and The Old Man and the Sea can be dealt with together because both contain honorable black athletes--one a boxer and the other an arm wrestler. It should be apparent by now that when Hemingway admires a character--black or white--it is because that person adheres to his own 'code ethic'; this is true of these two characters as well in that they both excel in their fields and, therefore, elicit admiration.

Bill Gorton, in The Sun Also Rises, upon returning to

Paris following a trip to Budapest and Vienna, tells his friend, Jake Barnes, about his trip. He cannot remember much, as it had been a 'drunken brawl' much of the time, but he does recall a prize-fight:

'Go on. Tell me about it.'

'Can't remember. Tell you anything I could remember.'

'Go on. Take that drink and remember.'

'Might remember a little,' Bill said.

'Remember something about a prize-fight. Enormous Vienna prize-fight. Had a nigger in it. Remember the nigger perfectly.'

'Go on.'

'Wonderful nigger. Looked like Tiger Flowers, only four times as big. All of a sudden everybody started to throw things. Not me. Nigger'd just knocked local boy down. Nigger put up his glove. Wanted to make a speech. Awful noble-looking nigger. Started to make a speech. Then local white boy hit him. Then he knocked white boy cold. Then everybody commenced to throw chairs. Nigger went home with us in our car. Couldn't get his clothes. Wore my coat. Remember the whole thing now. Big sporting evening.'

'What happened?'

'Loaned the nigger some clothes and went around with him to try and get his money. Claimed nigger owed them money on account of wrecking hall. Wonder who translated? Was it me?'

'Probably it wasn't you.'

'You're right. Wasn't me at all. Was another fellow. Think we called him the local Harvard man. Remember him now. Studying music.'

'How'd you come out?'

'Not so good, Jake. Injustice everywhere. Promoter claimed nigger promised let local boy stay. Claimed nigger violated contract. Can't knock out Vienna boy in Vienna. 'My God, Mister Gorton,' said nigger, 'I didn't do nothing in there for forty minutes but try and let him stay. That white boy musta ruptured himself swinging at me. I never did hit him.'

'Did you get any money?'

'No money, Jake. All we could get was nigger's clothes. Somebody took his watch, too. Splendid nigger. Big mistake to have come to Vienna. Not so good, Jake. Not so good.'

'What became of the nigger?'

'Went back to Cologne. Lives there. Married. Got a family. Going to write me a letter and send me the money I loaned him. Wonderful nigger. Hope I gave him the right address.'¹²³

The length of this passage attests to its importance--the relevance seems to be (aside from the obvious one of underscoring Bill's basic humanity and compassion) the fact that, out of the entire novel, the black fighter is the only family man, the only honest, admirable character presented. Bill admits that there was "injustice everywhere."¹²⁴ His doubt is not whether he will have his money returned by the fighter, but whether he remembered to give him the correct address. It should be emphasized that this is Hemingway's first novel, published in the mid-twenties, before critical attention became prevalent concerning minority portraiture in literature, making it an all the more significant aspect of Hemingway's portraiture of blacks because, at this time, writers were under no pressure to depict blacks realistically; therefore, Hemingway's admirable depiction of him is natural and spontaneous.

Another honorable black athlete is remembered by Santiago of The Old Man and the Sea. While fighting the fish, Santiago, "to give himself more confidence,"¹²⁵ remembers an arm wrestling match he once had with a black in a tavern at Casablanca. He calls him "the strongest man on the docks"¹²⁶ and relates how they were evenly matched at the struggle for twenty-four hours, during which time they bled from under their fingernails. With a final effort, Santiago forced down the

hand of his opponent--an opponent who Santiago describes as a "great negro"¹²⁷ and as "a fine man and a great athlete."¹²⁸ The struggle with the athlete parallels the struggle with the fish--evenly matched and struggles in which Santiago heroically admires his opponents. As he calls the black "the strongest man on the docks"¹²⁹ and a "great negro,"¹³⁰ and a "fine man and a great athlete,"¹³¹ so he refers to the fish as "great"¹³² and as "my friend"¹³³--"never have I seen a greater, or more beautiful, or a calmer or more noble thing than you, brother."¹³⁴ Santiago (and Hemingway) admires anyone or anything that represents an ability equal to his own.

Although the reference in The Old Man and the Sea is more brief than that in The Sun Also Rises, both athletes are treated with great respect. With these depictions of athletes, then, we can conclude that Hemingway, as noted earlier, admires anyone--black or white--who has gained excellence in his craft.

Sympathetic Blacks

Hemingway's last work, published posthumously, is entitled Islands in the Stream. It is set in Bimini, near Cuba, where Thomas Hudson, a painter, lives and works. Hudson has a household servant, Joseph, who is "tall with a very long, very black face and big hands and big feet. He wore a white jacket and trousers and was barefooted."¹³⁵ He is the stereotypic servant, always anticipating Hudson's needs, but he is treated kindly and with respect throughout the work. More important, though, is that in this book, Hemingway presents two situations

in particular involving blacks intended to elicit our sympathy.

As Hudson walks into town, he sees a black man being heckled by some prankster boys. The man is muttering, "man is persecuted. . . man has his robe of dignity plucked at and destroyed. Oh, Good Lord, forgive them for they know not what they do."¹³⁶ Blacks, probably to a greater extent than any other minority group, do have their dignity "plucked at" and, after so much "plucking," ultimately "destroyed"--destroyed by unthoughtful, uncaring, unloving people; people their equal but people who, nonetheless, belittle and finally destroy their dignity. In the end of this passage, which asks for the Lord's forgiveness, the black is appealing to the only thing he has to cling to--faith and religion--that promises something better for him. This statement should be kept in mind during the next two scenes involving blacks as it accurately summarizes what is happening.

After passing the man, Hudson meets Louis, a black boy, who tells him about a rich 'gentleman' recently arrived from New York. The man had hired Louis to take him bonefishing, and Louis describes him to Hudson as follows:

'Mr. Tom, he's the damnedest gentleman you ever saw before or since. He had me singing for them. You know I can't sing good like Josey but I sing as good as I can and sometimes I sing better than I can. I'm singing good as I can. You know how it is. You heard me sing. All he wants to hear is that mama don't want no peas no rice no coconut oil song. Over and over. It's an old song and I get tired so I said to him, 'Sir I know new songs. Good songs. Fine songs. And I know old songs such

as the loss of John Jacob Astor on the Titanic when sunk by an iceberg and I would be glad to sing them rather than that no peas no rice song if you so wish.' I said it polite and pleasant as you want. As you know I would say it. So this gentleman say, 'Listen you ignorant black little bastard I own more stores and factories and newspapers than John Jacob Astor had pots to, you know the word, in, and I'll take you and shove your head in those pots if you try to tell me what I want to hear. . . .'¹³⁷

This is a prime example of an American white man attempting to keep the black boy in his 'subordinate' place, according to the stereotypic conceptions he holds of the child, in order to boost his own ego. I suggest that Hemingway could not have written this speech had he not understood the causes which produced the situation in the first place and understood the devastating results of such stereotyping. Presenting the situation through the loveable Louis has the effect of another "emotional time-bomb" in that the reader's sympathetic reaction is inevitable when he considers that this is probably the first confrontation with blatant racial bigotry that Louis has encountered; he is at a loss to understand it but somehow senses that he will most certainly have to live with it now for the rest of his life.

Hemingway, furthermore, notes the pathetic state that some of the blacks live in on the island:

The lean-to was built at a steep slant and there was barely room for two people to lie down in it. The couple who lived in it were sitting in the entrance cooking coffee in a tin can. They were Negroes, filthy, scaly with age and dirt, wearing clothing made from old sugar sacks, and they were very old. He could not see the dog.

'¿Y el perro?' he asked the chauffeur.

'Since a long time I haven't seen him.'

They had passed these people now for several years. At one time the girl, whose letters he had read last night, had exclaimed about the shame of it each time they passed the lean-to.

'Why don't you do something about it, then?' he had asked her. 'Why do you always say things are so terrible and write so well about how terrible they are and never do anything about it?'

This made the girl angry and she had stopped the car, gotten out, gone over to the lean-to and given the old woman twenty dollars and told her this was to help her find a better place to live and to buy something to eat.

'Si, senorita,' the old woman said. 'You are very amiable.'

The next time they came by the couple were living in the same place and they waved happily. They had bought a dog. It was a white dog too, small and curly, probably not bred originally, Thomas Hudson thought, for the coal dust trade.

'What do you think has become of the dog?' Thomas Hudson asked the chauffeur.

'It probably died. They have nothing to eat.'

'We must get them another dog,' Thomas Hudson said. ¹³⁸

The condition of these blacks is so poor that the mongrel dog adds a great dimension of love. It offers them affection which can be found no where else. It is not only ironic but very sad that a "white" animal brings to this couple something that no man can or will. Hudson, upon learning that the dog died and that the couple are starving, decides that he must get them another dog--at least he can give the couple something that will return love to them. Thus, Thomas Hudson, but to a greater extent Hemingway himself, is sympathetic to this scene. There is nothing stereotypic about this black couple, they are merely portrayed as pathetic. They elicit the same kind of emotional response as the passage concerning Louis does. And,

it is here in his final work that Hemingway comes closer to a direct humanistic social statement than in any of his fiction, with the possible exception of The Fifth Column.

Henry Seidel Canby says that what impresses him in Hemingway's work is the "feeling for pathos without sentimentality"¹³⁹ and I feel that the two passages in this work are very good examples of this aspect of Hemingway's writing style.

Individuals

Green Hills of Africa, published in 1935, I have saved until last because, unlike in the novels, Hemingway's purpose in this book is to "write an absolutely true book to see whether the shape of a country and the pattern of a month's action can, if truly presented, compete with a work of the imagination."¹⁴⁰ Furthermore, "none of the characters or incidents in this book is imaginary."¹⁴¹ The book is based upon a safari in East Africa which Hemingway and his wife took in the winter of 1933-34. Because it is a true accounting, Hemingway's attitudes can be easily assessed without interpreting them through a character.

Critics have reacted to this work both favorably and unfavorably. Concerning characterization, Harry Levin asserts that "Green Hills of Africa lacks in the way of social or psychological insight. As W.M. Frohock has perceived, 'Hemingway is less concerned with human relations than with his own relationship to the Universe.'"¹⁴² Richard Hovey takes

Levin's position with

nor do the persons in the story engage us. . . the natives in the party are also two-dimensional For the most part, we see these Negroes only as bwana Hemingway's servants. Of the tribes he encounters Hemingway likes the Masai. In their playfulness and handsomeness and good will, he evidently finds his Noble Savage. In general, however, the African people stir no curiosity in Hemingway.¹⁴³

Young disagrees, however, contesting that "Green Hills of Africa has a wonderfully keen awareness of people (even of the natives, from a bwana point of view) and of the country, and is excellent on the hunting."¹⁴⁴ Carlos Baker concurs with Young, commenting that "few writers have been able to match the graphic vitality of Hemingway's presentation of the land, the natives, and the animals."¹⁴⁵ And he insists that "there is no neglect of humankind, . . . among the most substantial parts of the book are the portraits of the natives."¹⁴⁶

I suggest that we will find the positive critics' assessments more accurate because Hemingway does, indeed, paint some rich pictures of the natives. His admiration is apparent in the following example:

. . . all the words came to seem the proper and natural words and there was nothing odd or unseemly in the stretching of the ears, in the tribal scars, or in a man carrying a spear. The tribal marks and the tattooed places seemed natural and handsome adornments and I regretted not having any of my own. My own scars were all informal, some irregular and sprawling, others simply puffy welts. I had one on my forehead that people still commented on, asking if I had bumped my head; but Droop had handsome ones beside his cheekbones and others, symmetrical and

decorative, on his chest and belly.¹⁴⁷

Hemingway not only admires Droop's decorative scars, he is actually jealous of them; and in his being jealous of Droop, he admits his inferiority to him. And, his honestly-told accounting of the development of close friendship between himself and Kamau is also warm:

Kamau, the driver, was a Kikuyu, a quiet man of about thirty-five who, with an old brown tweed coat some shooter had discarded, trousers heavily patched on the knees and ripped open again, and a very ragged shirt, managed always to give an impression of great elegance. Kamau was very modest, quiet, and an excellent driver and now, as we came out of the bush country, and into an open, scrubby, desert-looking stretch, I looked at him, whose elegance, achieved with an old coat and a safety pin, whose modesty, pleasantness and skill I admired so much now, and thought how, when we first were out, he had very nearly died of fever, and that if he had died it would have meant nothing to me except that we would be short a driver; while now whenever or wherever he should die I would feel badly.¹⁴⁸

Hemingway could not be more honest in admitting that Kamau's death at one time would have meant nothing to him but the loss of a driver, whereas they develop such a close friendship that "now whenever or wherever he should die I would feel badly."¹⁴⁹

M'Cola, a native gun-bearer, Hemingway includes for a comic dimension but not at the man's expense. He and Hemingway carry on a bantering relationship, and they share many private jokes:

M'Cola sat laughing; his old man's healthy laugh, his making-fun-of-me laugh, his bird-shooting laugh that dated from a streak of raging misses one time that had delighted him. Now when I killed, it was a joke as when we shot a hyena;

the funniest joke of all. He laughed always to see the birds tumble and when I missed he roared and shook his head again and again. . . . So bird shooting became this marvellous joke. If I killed, the joke was on the birds and M'Cola would shake his head and laugh and make his hands go round and round to show how the bird turned over in the air. And if I missed, I was the clown of the piece and he would look at me and shake with laughing.¹⁵⁰

Referring later to M'Cola's tracking, Hemingway admits that "M'Cola was immeasurably the better man and the better tracker."¹⁵¹

The Masai village which they stumble across while hunting kudu delights Hemingway. He describes the Masai as "the tallest, best-built handsomest people I had ever seen and the first truly light-hearted happy people I had seen in Africa."¹⁵² Continuing his description of the Masai natives, Hemingway is atypically elaborate in his praise of them:

. . . seeing them running and so damned handsome and so happy made us all happy. I had never seen such quick disinterested friendliness, nor such fine looking people. . . they certainly were our friends. . . they had that attitude that makes brothers, that unexpressed but instant and complete acceptance that you must be Masai wherever it is you come from. That attitude you only get from the best of the English, the best of the Hungarians and the very best Spaniards; the thing that used to be the most clear distinction of nobility when there was nobility. It is an ignorant attitude and the people who have it do not survive, but very few pleasanter things ever happen to you than the encountering of it.¹⁵³

"They had that attitude that makes brothers. . . ."¹⁵⁴ It is, then, the attitude, the feeling, that makes brothers, not the color of the skin.

It is difficult to understand how some critics conclude

that Hemingway's treatment of the natives in this work is shallow or two-dimensional; on the contrary, he presents these blacks with as much glowing, straightforward admiration as can be found in anything else he ever wrote; and this is Ernest Hemingway speaking to us directly!

Conclusion

It is interesting that one of Ernest Hemingway's earliest works was prompted by a work which treats blacks abstractly. With Sherwood Anderson's Dark Laughter in 1925, "the abstract use of Negro characters reached its peak and ran its course. . . the sacrifice of personality for symbolic value seemed too great for authors writing later in the twenties."¹⁵⁵ Anderson's "sacrifice of personality" produced in Hemingway the compelling urge to refute the damage done to art caused by Dark Laughter. Ironically, this rebuttal necessarily took the form of exaggerated black stereotypes, as we examined in The Torrents of Spring--Hemingway's reply to Dark Laughter.

James Smith notes that "in works such as The Sun Also Rises. . . writers of the 'Lost Generation' revealed the extent to which their group felt alienated from the civilization that could tolerate the horrors of modern warfare and the smothering effects of a materialistic culture."¹⁵⁶ But probably more acutely than the Lost Generation, Smith asserts that "the Negro intellectual felt betrayed by and alienated from society."¹⁵⁷ Ralph Ellison also notes the similarities between the feelings of the Lost Generation and blacks:

When asked to explain his remark that the writings of Ernest Hemingway expressed a great deal of what the New Negro was thinking, Ralph Ellison remarked that the attitude of Hemingway's heroes, springing from the awareness that they lived outside the values of the larger society, was very similar to the feeling of the New Negro artists. Moreover, 'Hemingway in depicting the attitudes of athletes, expatriates, . . . and impotent idealists, told us quite a lot about what was happening to that most representative group of Negro Americans, the jazz musicians--who also lived by an extreme code of withdrawal, technical and artistic excellence, rejection of the values of respectable society. They replaced the abstract and much-betrayed ideals of that society with the more physical values of eating, drinking, copulating, loyalty to friends, and dedication to the discipline and values of their art.'¹⁵⁸

However, that more parallels between the two groups--that is, the Lost Generation and blacks--were not recognized, or were perhaps just ignored, by Hemingway is unfortunate because, given his acute perception and wide influence, he might have done blacks a great service in expounding their social cause. This, though, is admittedly not his literary purpose.

Because Hemingway's victory is a technical one which stresses economy of words, it is not surprising that he at times utilizes the shorthand convenience of the stereotype. After a close examination of his work, however, I conclude that, while he does use stereotypes, he does not do so at the expense of blacks, except perhaps in To Have and Have Not, where Wesley and the other blacks are treated degradingly. Nevertheless, even here, the prejudiced attitudes expressed are those of Harry Morgan, a bigoted white murderer. On the other hand, such depictions of admirable and honorable blacks

as we find in the athletes of The Sun Also Rises and The Old Man and the Sea, plus the sympathetic depiction of Louis and other blacks found in Islands in the Stream, far outweigh the negative treatment of Wesley and the bait-man in To Have and Have Not. Furthermore, Hemingway's great admiration of and respect for his black friends in Africa, expressed openly and honestly in Green Hills of Africa, leaves no question as to his true attitude toward blacks. Certainly there can be no doubt when his works are studied thoroughly and without preconceived notions.

While some critics have criticized Hemingway for not carrying the social banner for blacks, it is only fair to remark upon Hemingway's assets. As Harold Gardiner summarizes, Hemingway possesses

a poet's awareness of the beauty of the universe in which man's too fleeting hour is spent; an almost exaggerated consciousness of the unending struggle, both internal and external, to which man is committed; a mastery of syntax and diction which always reveals and never beclouds his other virtues; a sure eye for the dramatic scene and an unfailing ability to reproduce it.¹⁵⁹

That these assets are heavily weighted on the technical side is a victory for Hemingway as it is precisely what he wished to achieve. I suggest that he superbly accomplished his literary purpose--and at no one's expense.

Endnotes

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- 33 Ernest Hemingway, The Short Stories of Ernest Hemingway, p. 316.
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⁴⁵Kathryn Osburn Cowan, Black/White Stereotypes in the Fiction of Richard Wright, James Baldwin and Ralph Ellison, Ph.D. thesis (Ann Arbor, Michigan: Xerox Corp., 1972), p. 30.

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